

To be treated as strictly CONFIDENTIAL and NOT to be published or broadcast before -

Evening Newspapers - Friday, 29th August, 1958.

Morning Newspapers - Saturday, 30th August, 1958.

Broadcasting Stations - 11 a.m., Friday, 29th August, 1958.

RETAIL PRICES - JUNE QUARTER, 1958.

Index numbers of retail prices for the June quarter of 1958 (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1,000) were as shown below.

"C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases, June Quarter, 1958.

| City. | Aggregate All Groups. | | | All Groups, excluding Price Movements in Potatoes and Onions. | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|---|------------------|-------------------|
| | Index Number. | Increase from - | | Index Number. | Increase from - | |
| | | June Qtr., 1957. | March Qtr., 1958. | | June Qtr., 1957. | March Qtr., 1958. |
| | | % | % | | % | % |
| Brisbane .. | 2462 | 5.3 | 2.1 | 2492 | 6.1 | 2.5 |
| Toowoomba .. | 2439 | 2.8 | 0.4 | 2468 | 3.4 | 0.7 |
| Rockhampton .. | 2436 | 2.6 | 0.7 | 2465 | 3.4 | 1.0 |
| Townsville .. | 2547 | 3.2 | 1.1 | 2578 | 4.2 | 1.4 |
| Bundaberg .. | 2440 | 4.5 | 1.6 | 2469 | 5.4 | 2.0 |
| Weighted Average | | | | | | |
| Five Towns .. | 2464 | 4.8 | 1.8 | 2493 | 5.5 | 2.1 |
| Warwick .. | 2401 | 3.3 | 1.0 | 2427 | 4.1 | 1.3 |

The "C" Series index number for Brisbane in the June quarter, 1958, was 2.1 per cent. higher than in March quarter, 1958. This was the largest increase since that for September quarter, 1956, and added to the rises of the three previous quarters, has meant an increase of 5.3 per cent. during the preceding twelve months. The rise from March to June quarter was due almost entirely to increased house rents, the other sections of the index showing only a small net rise compared with the preceding quarter.

The rent section of the index increased by 18.0 per cent. in Brisbane. This was the immediate result of amended legislation which permitted increases in rents of up to 20 per cent. without application to the Fair Rents Court for a large proportion of rented houses, and, for other houses, such increases as might be determined by the Court on the basis of valuation in 1948 instead of 1942 as previously. Rents in other cities also rose, though not as much as in Brisbane.

In contrast with the two preceding quarters the food and grocery group reflected a small decrease in Brisbane. Reduced potato prices more than offset minor price rises in a few other items, the net decrease being 0.2 per cent. However, if the effect of potato and onion prices, which have fluctuated rather erratically during recent years, is excluded there was a slight rise of 0.6 per cent.

Changes in sections of the index are shown in the following table.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases, June Quarter, 1958.

| City. | Food and Groceries. | | | Clothing and Footwear. | | Miscellaneous Items. | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| | From Year Ended June, 1939. | From March Quarter, 1958. | | From Year Ended June, 1939. | From March Quarter, 1958. | From Year Ended June, 1939. | From March Quarter, 1958. |
| | A | A | B | | | | |
| Brisbane | 225.0 | -0.2 | 0.6 | 300.1 | 0.7 | 141.4 | 0.3 |
| Toowoomba | 242.0 | -1.0 | -0.2 | 304.3 | 0.8 | 140.7 | 0.6 |
| Rockhampton | 206.1 | -0.4 | 0.5 | 294.1 | 0.7 | 149.4 | 0.1 |
| Townsville | 203.2 | 0.5 | 1.2 | 294.9 | 0.6 | 153.0 | 0.1 |
| Bundaberg | 217.2 | 0.8 | 1.8 | 301.3 | 0.8 | 140.5 | 0.0 |
| Warwick | 231.7 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 304.9 | 0.9 | 145.3 | 0.1 |

Note: A includes, and B excludes, price movements due to potatoes and onions.

Food and Groceries.

The food and grocery section (including potatoes and onions) decreased in Toowoomba, Rockhampton and Brisbane and increased in Bundaberg, Townsville and Warwick. Potato prices decreased substantially in all cities, meat prices decreased in Toowoomba and increased elsewhere, while prices of eggs, onions, and dried fruits increased slightly in all cities.

Clothing and Footwear.

This section of the index advanced slightly in all cities, ranging from 0.6 per cent. in Townsville to a maximum of 0.9 in Warwick. There were small price rises for all types of winter knit-wear.

Miscellaneous.

Once again, this group recorded only a slight upward movement in all cities. There were increased prices for gas in Brisbane and firewood in Toowoomba.

Rent (4 and 5 roomed houses).

With the easing of rent restrictions the following rises were registered:- Brisbane, 18.0 per cent., Bundaberg, 11.7 per cent., Warwick, 8.8 per cent., Townsville, 5.9 per cent., Rockhampton, 5.6 per cent., and Toowoomba, 4.3 per cent.

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

The Commonwealth industrial authority suspended automatic ("cost of living") adjustments after the adjustment which operated from the beginning of the first pay-period in August, 1953. Since that date, adjustments to the basic wages have been made from time to time, often on special applications, both by the Commonwealth and State industrial authorities. Particulars of such adjustments have been given in previous issues of this bulletin. At present, the New South Wales basic wage alone is being varied automatically with movements of the index numbers, while in Queensland and Western Australia, the State Industrial Courts have usually varied the wage after the index numbers have been published.

Following publication of the index numbers for the June quarter, 1958, the Queensland State Industrial Court raised its basic wage by 6s. for males and 4s. 6d. for females. In Sydney, the "C" Series index number fell by 4 points, but this was not sufficient to cause any "automatic" adjustment to the basic wage. In Western Australia the rates for Perth were increased by 3s. 9d. for males and 2s. 6d. for females. In Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania there was no change.

Current basic wage rates are given in the following table.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates.
Australian Capital Cities.

| Capital City. | Retail Price Index. | | | | Commonwealth Basic Wage. | | State Basic Wage. | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------------|------|------------------|------|--------------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|----------|-------|---------------------------------|--|
| | March Qtr., 1958. | | June Qtr., 1958. | | Males. ^a | | Males. | | Females. | | Date of Operation. ^b | |
| | A | B | A | B | | | | | | | | |
| Brisbane | 2411 | 2432 | 2462 | 2492 | £ | s. d. | £ | s. d. | £ | s. d. | 28. 7. 58 | |
| Sydney | 2665 | 2677 | 2661 | 2676 | 12 | 3 0 | 12 | 14 0 | 8 | 12 0 | May, 1958 | |
| Melbourne | 2564 | 2566 | 2574 | 2581 | 13 | 8 0 | 13 | 14 0 | 10 | 5 6 | Aug., 1956 | |
| Adelaide | 2466 | 2472 | 2522 | 2537 | 13 | 0 0 | 13 | 3 0 | 9 | 17 0 | 26. 5. 58 | |
| Perth | 2712 | 2718 | 2747 | 2753 | 12 | 16 0 | 12 | 16 0 | 9 | 12 0 | 4. 8. 58 | |
| Hobart | 2707 | 2716 | 2712 | 2735 | 13 | 1 0 | 13 | 12 3 | 8 | 17 0 | Aug., 1956 | |

Note: A includes, and B excludes, price movements due to potatoes and onions.

^a Operative first pay-period beginning on or after 21st May, 1958. The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

^b Where dates are not quoted wage rates operate from beginning of first pay-period in month shown.

S. E. SOLOMON
DEPUTY COMMONWEALTH STATISTICIAN
AND GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN.

BRISBANE.

28th August, 1958.

The "C" Series Retail Price Index.

(Base for Each Section: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

| City. | Year | Year | Year | Quarter Ended - | | | | June, 1958. |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | Ended June, 1939. | Ended March, 1958. | Ended June, 1958. | June, 1957. | Sept., 1957. | Dec., 1957. | March, 1958. | |
| 1. Aggregate - All Groups. | | | | | | | | |
| Brisbane .. | 863 | 2366 | 2397 | 2337 | 2343 | 2371 | 2411 | 2462 |
| Toowoomba .. | 851 | 2389 | 2405 | 2373 | 2363 | 2389 | 2430 | 2439 |
| Rockhampton .. | 861 | 2389 | 2404 | 2374 | 2372 | 2389 | 2420 | 2436 |
| Townsville .. | 912 | 2480 | 2500 | 2469 | 2452 | 2480 | 2519 | 2547 |
| Bundaberg .. | 841 | 2356 | 2382 | 2335 | 2329 | 2356 | 2402 | 2440 |
| Weighted Average | | | | | | | | |
| Five Towns .. | 864 | 2376 | 2404 | 2351 | 2353 | 2380 | 2420 | 2464 |
| Warwick .. | 822 | 2345 | 2364 | 2325 | 2326 | 2351 | 2378 | 2401 |
| 2. All Groups EXCLUDING price movements of potatoes and onions (a). | | | | | | | | |
| Brisbane .. | 863 | 2386 | 2422 | 2349 | 2362 | 2402 | 2432 | 2492 |
| Toowoomba .. | 851 | 2410 | 2431 | 2386 | 2385 | 2419 | 2450 | 2468 |
| Rockhampton .. | 861 | 2410 | 2430 | 2384 | 2392 | 2422 | 2440 | 2465 |
| Townsville .. | 912 | 2504 | 2530 | 2473 | 2482 | 2517 | 2543 | 2578 |
| Bundaberg .. | 841 | 2374 | 2406 | 2342 | 2347 | 2387 | 2420 | 2469 |
| Weighted Average | | | | | | | | |
| Five Towns .. | 864 | 2397 | 2430 | 2362 | 2373 | 2412 | 2441 | 2493 |
| Warwick .. | 822 | 2361 | 2385 | 2331 | 2338 | 2377 | 2396 | 2427 |
| 3. Food and Groceries. | | | | | | | | |
| Brisbane .. | 856 | 2687 | 2723 | 2641 | 2631 | 2689 | 2788 | 2782 |
| Toowoomba .. | 814 | 2743 | 2740 | 2695 | 2654 | 2708 | 2813 | 2784 |
| Rockhampton .. | 895 | 2681 | 2701 | 2661 | 2638 | 2675 | 2751 | 2740 |
| Townsville .. | 955 | 2798 | 2823 | 2794 | 2728 | 2788 | 2881 | 2896 |
| Bundaberg .. | 903 | 2734 | 2775 | 2697 | 2665 | 2731 | 2841 | 2864 |
| Weighted Average | | | | | | | | |
| Five Towns .. | 864 | 2698 | 2731 | 2658 | 2641 | 2697 | 2795 | 2789 |
| Warwick .. | 846 | 2736 | 2760 | 2709 | 2698 | 2732 | 2803 | 2806 |
| 4. Food and Groceries EXCLUDING price movements of potatoes and onions (a). | | | | | | | | |
| Brisbane .. | 856 | 2748 | 2796 | 2675 | 2684 | 2780 | 2851 | 2867 |
| Toowoomba .. | 814 | 2776 | 2810 | 2728 | 2713 | 2791 | 2871 | 2866 |
| Rockhampton .. | 895 | 2736 | 2771 | 2683 | 2691 | 2764 | 2806 | 2821 |
| Townsville .. | 955 | 2860 | 2905 | 2803 | 2805 | 2887 | 2946 | 2982 |
| Bundaberg .. | 903 | 2783 | 2842 | 2710 | 2711 | 2816 | 2895 | 2947 |
| Weighted Average | | | | | | | | |
| Five Towns .. | 864 | 2757 | 2803 | 2688 | 2695 | 2788 | 2856 | 2874 |
| Warwick .. | 846 | 2779 | 2817 | 2725 | 2727 | 2807 | 2858 | 2877 |
| 5. Clothing and Footwear. | | | | | | | | |
| Brisbane .. | 829 | 3269 | 3287 | 3245 | 3259 | 3280 | 3293 | 3317 |
| Toowoomba .. | 829 | 3309 | 3324 | 3289 | 3298 | 3322 | 3325 | 3352 |
| Rockhampton .. | 845 | 3299 | 3310 | 3285 | 3293 | 3308 | 3308 | 3330 |
| Townsville .. | 840 | 3284 | 3296 | 3269 | 3277 | 3293 | 3296 | 3317 |
| Bundaberg .. | 839 | 3325 | 3340 | 3309 | 3320 | 3332 | 3339 | 3367 |
| Weighted Average | | | | | | | | |
| Five Towns .. | 831 | 3277 | 3294 | 3254 | 3267 | 3288 | 3298 | 3322 |
| Warwick .. | 825 | 3281 | 3304 | 3248 | 3258 | 3306 | 3311 | 3340 |

(a) Excluded as from September quarter, 1955.